

Chapter V

Conclusions

In the southern cemetery of Achziv in the Iron Age, the built tombs (Types I.A and I.B) are the earliest evidence for burials found so far. These tombs, built of rough stones, are unique in building style at Achziv. This style is known from eleventh century sites where the Sea Peoples settled, such as Tel Zeror and Tel Farah (S). This evidence suggests that the Sea Peoples settled in Achziv. The description of the Phoenician coast in the Egyptian Wen Ammon story shows the complex relations between the rulers of the Sea Peoples along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean and the rulers of the Phoenicians.³⁷

Tomb T.C.4 (Type I.B) was never finished. Its rough-stone building style does not continue among the other tombs in Achziv during the Iron Age. Since we have not found any other tombs of this type here, it might be assumed that the discontinuation of this style of building is related to the disappearance of the Sea Peoples from Achziv.

The chamber tombs built of ashlar stones (Type IC, dating as early as the tenth century) ought to be related to the Phoenicians. These tombs show an influence rooted in the Late Bronze Age culture of the Phoenician coast, even though a gap of 300 years exists between these tombs and the fourteenth- to thirteenth-century built tombs at Ugarit.

Why were men, women and children, together with their burial gifts, interred as secondary burials in T.C.4 (Type I.B)? Similarly, why were secondary burials placed in pits under the floors in the chamber tombs built of ashlar stones (T.C.1 and T.C.2; Type I.C)? One explanation for this mass of secondary burials is that they were moved to the southern cemetery from another location, perhaps the northern cemetery. It is possible that the need arose to "clear" the northern cemetery sometime in the tenth to ninth century, when it turned to serve as a cremation site (Tophet). The newly established tenth-century Tophet with its central crematorium structure might have been the impetus for moving inhumation burials to the southern cemetery and thereby creating space for the new cremations.

Since the secondary burials in the pits were not added to the original burials of the tombs, but instead

were buried separately under the floor at the foot of the entrances (in tombs type I.C), this might be an indication that those secondary burials were related to the owners of the tombs. These areas were chosen for the pits in order to separate these burials from those already in the tombs. Moreover, since on entering the tomb one must have had to step over these burials, their location probably indicates their relatively less importance.

Tombs T.C.1 and T.C.2 (Type I.C) are evidence of the last phase of a 300-year old architectural style. These were later developed as rock cut tombs adapting characteristics of the ashlar built tombs. Those in Achziv were constructed during the tenth century and were used for many generations until the end of the Iron Age. Similar burial customs continued throughout this time.

Burials and gifts were laid together. The burials were laid in a supine position along the long wall away from the entrance. The previous burials and their burial gifts were moved to the pile at the back of the tomb. The gifts in the built tombs were personal, mainly pottery vessels and jewelry. From some of the gifts we infer the occupation of the deceased, such as the lead weights from a fishing net found by Prausnitz in T.C.1, which were most likely owned by a fisherman.³⁸

The bullhead mask found in Tomb T.C.2 probably symbolizes the god Ba'al. The representation of the main Phoenician god Ba'al appears also on stelae in the Tophet site of Achziv. These are examples where the representation of the god Ba'al was found in burial complexes. Concerning the bullhead masks made from bull skulls found in Cyprus (see discussion Type I.C), it can be assumed that the votive masks from Achziv were considered as a talisman, which people would associate with the role of bull skulls during cult ceremonies in the temples.

While discussing the Achziv tombs, it is important to emphasize that remains of cult activity were preserved outside the tombs. This shows that burial ceremonies were conducted in the tombs' surroundings.

In the built tombs in the southern cemetery, men, women and children of all ages were buried (Types I.B and I.C). No cremation burials were brought

³⁷ Pritchard, 16-24.

³⁸ These finds are unpublished.

inside the built tombs. However, a very interesting phenomenon was discovered near the tombs. Child burials inside pottery vessels were found near these tombs, one burial in each pottery vessel. Three burials were found in separate jars and one in a bowl. This phenomenon of burials outside the tombs reminds us of the cremated burials of adults also found outside some of the tombs. We know that children were never cremated in the Iron Age (or in other periods) in Phoenicia. Accordingly, it is highly probable that the same reasons that caused some of the children to be buried outside the tombs also caused some of the Phoenician adults to be cremated and buried separately (L.500 near T.A.68).

In tomb II.A.1 a pottery mask of a woman was found by Prausnitz. Several masks were found in other shaft tombs in the southern cemetery by Ben-Dor. All were votive masks, averaging 13 cm, with three holes along the perimeter to attach a string (Stern 1976: 117). Different assumptions have been proposed as to the use of these masks and their meaning. It seems likely that they were meant to give protection to the deceased (Stern 1976: 117-118; Culican 1976: 71 ff.; Pritchard 1988: 70-71).

Quarrying of five of the tombs, similar to tomb type II.A, was suddenly stopped (Type II.B). The next phase of tomb building continued in rock-cut shaft tombs with closed rock-cut ceilings. In the unfinished tombs the methods of cutting the rock are clearly visible. The shaft and the chamber were cut simultaneously from above, using the vertical quarrying technique. This had the added benefit of producing rectangular stones for further construction. In the tombs with rock-cut ceilings, the rock was cut out by a chisel from the side, resulting in piles of waste chips. However, type II.C shows a transitional phase, indicating the hesitations relating to this change. In these transitional tombs the open ceiling of the burial chamber became smaller. In these tombs, both chiseling techniques were used: the vertical quarrying technique for the shafts and chiseling from the side for the chamber itself. It is clear that by the eighth century, all the shaft tombs were constructed with closed rock-cut ceilings.

During the Iron Age in Achziv, the chamber tombs built of ashlar stones (Type I.C) represent the first phase of a successive development of tomb architecture. These are followed by shaft tombs with built ceilings (Type II). Five tombs, begun in a similar

manner to Type II.A, were unfinished. These we classify as Type II.B. The ashlar building style is abandoned and followed by the rock-cut style that preserved some of the previous building characteristics, such as the slightly inward slanted walls and ceilings built of stone slabs. The built ceilings emphasize the close ties between the two building styles. This development appeared sometime in the tenth century. At this time the trend begins to separate each burial individually by putting a few medium size stones around the burial as a border. A bordering line of stones, found in Type II.A, developed into beds along the walls in Type II.C. The large number of burials (more than ten) found in these tombs indicates that the separation purpose of each burial from the others was not achieved.

In the shaft tombs the same picture of personal burial gifts appears as in the built tombs. The deceased were buried together with their personal jewelry, mainly copper alloy earrings and bracelets, pottery vessels, working tools and cult objects. The horsemen figurines and the iron arrowheads discovered in T.C.68 (type II.E) are probably related to the occupation of one or more of the deceased in the tomb who were soldiers. It is interesting to note the figurines of the musicians playing tambourines or double flutes that were laid in these tombs. Their existence in the tombs can be related to the need to entertain the gods or simply to entertain the deceased themselves in their life after death.

The shaft tombs in the southern cemetery do not continue in use during the Persian Period. It seems that towards the end of the Iron Age (7-6 centuries) and through the Persian period, new developed shaft tombs were cut solely in the eastern cemetery. These tombs continue the trend of separating the burials by using not only beds but also by adding niches (*kukhim*) and cut sarcophagi.

It is very important to remember that most of the tombs in the southern cemetery were continuously used through many generations in the Iron Age. Only tomb T.C.3 can be dated from the end of eleventh century to the beginning of tenth century and tomb T.C.4 can be dated from the tenth century to the end of the ninth century. The other earlier tombs (types Ic and IIa) were used over hundreds of years until the end of the Iron Age (Mazar 2000). The excavations at the southern cemetery of Achziv give us a rich picture of the Phoenicians' material culture in their homeland.

Summary table - Built tombs (Sea-People (?) tradition)

Type of tomb	Date
<i>Type I.A:</i> Cist tombs built of <u>rough stones</u> . (?) <input type="checkbox"/>	end of eleventh century
<i>Type I.B:</i> Chamber tomb built of <u>rough stones</u> .	end of eleventh century - beginning of tenth century

Summary table - Built tombs (Phoenician tradition)

Traditional LB (Ugarit) <input type="checkbox"/>	tenth century
<i>Type I.C:</i> Chamber tombs built of ashlar stones <input type="checkbox"/>	end of tenth century
<i>Type II.A:</i> Shaft tombs with built ceiling <input type="checkbox"/>	end of tenth century – Beginning of ninth century
<i>Type II.B:</i> Unfinished shaft tombs with built ceiling. <input type="checkbox"/>	ninth century
<i>Type II.C:</i> Transitional type of the shaft tombs with <u>built ceilings</u> . <input type="checkbox"/>	ninth century
<i>Type II.D:</i> Simple shaft tombs with <u>closed ceilings</u> . <input type="checkbox"/>	ninth to eighth century
<i>Type II.E:</i> Shaft Tombs with burial beds <input type="checkbox"/>	end of ninth century – fourth century
Types that do not appear in the Southern Cemetery: Complex shaft tombs with <u>beds</u> and additional <u>kukhim</u> and <u>cut sarcophagi</u> , appears in the Eastern Cemetery	